



Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ICEF/1996/P/L.23
9 November 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
First regular session 1996
22-26 January 1996
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

FOR ACTION

COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY NOTE**

Guatemala

SUMMARY

The Executive Director presents the country programme strategy note for Guatemala for a programme of cooperation for the period 1997 to 2001.

Following some 30 years of internal conflict, Guatemala is on the road to peace and economic recovery. However, the majority of the population live in poverty. Poverty is concentrated among the indigenous populations, who also were most affected by the armed conflict. Through its National Plan of Action and the peace process, the Government has stated its commitment towards the achievement of a range of social development goals, including those for children and women. Among them are the promotion of democracy and integration, equitable development and the fulfilment of the decade goals, and respect for human rights.

From previous UNICEF cooperation, there are several key lessons to apply to the proposed country programme strategy. They emphasize the overall sustainability of decentralized actions, the success of new models focused on community empowerment and the overriding influence of advocacy and social mobilization programmes on society. As a result, the major strategies planned for the future cooperation are advocacy/social mobilization, service delivery, empowerment, capacity-building and horizontal cooperation in Central America. These strategies will support the following two programmes: social policy development, which will be implemented at the national level and will aim to support social policy reform, promote and support the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and achieve the active participation of civil society in social development efforts; and integrated basic services, which will be implemented in seven departments.

* E/ICEF/1996/2.

** An addendum to the present report containing the final country programme recommendation will be submitted to the Executive Board for approval at its third regular session of 1996.

THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

1. More than one half of Guatemala's estimated 10 million population are comprised of 22 indigenous Mayan groups, most of whom live in rural poverty, each speaking a different language. Fifty-four per cent of the population are children under 18 years of age. The top 20 per cent of the population earn 61 per cent of national income, and 20 per cent of the poorest households earn 2 per cent. An estimated 75 per cent of the population live in poverty, of whom 54 per cent live in extreme poverty.
2. The majority of the poor are concentrated in seven highland departments - which are also the most affected by internal armed conflict - and in marginal urban areas. In those areas, social indicators are some 60 per cent worse than the national averages. The indigenous population has not yet sufficiently benefited from the development process, nor does the educational system take into sufficient account the variety of languages and native cultures.
3. Structural social inequities have contributed to more than 30 years of internal armed conflict which has created 750,000 orphans, refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. A peace process is now under way with United Nations' mediation. Human rights is a key issue, and an agreement is being implemented under the supervision of the Special United Nations Mission for Guatemala.
4. Since 1990, significant progress has been made towards the attainment of some of the decade goals. According to official government figures, both infant and child mortality rates have continued to decrease at a rate that is sufficient to achieve the mortality reduction goals. Mortality due to diarrhoeal diseases has declined with the increased use of oral rehydration therapy to 70 per cent. Sugar fortification with vitamin A also has increased to almost 100 per cent; national salt iodization was estimated at 80 per cent in 1994. Eighty per cent of the national hospitals have been assessed as baby-friendly. External cooperation combined with the increased participation of civil society have been key factors in these achievements. However, sustainability of these goals will require effective social policies that are implemented in a context of peace and human rights.
5. Special efforts will be needed for the achievement of other goals such as for universal child immunization, which is less than the 80 per cent target; maternal mortality, which is 250 per 100,000 live births (1992); rural water supply and sanitation coverage; and increased access to primary school education.
6. The Congress already has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As part of the agreement signed by the Presidents of Central America at their Summit held in El Salvador in 1995, the Government has updated its National Plan of Action (Programa de Desarrollo Social) (PLADES)) and reiterated its commitment to achieving the goals. The Government also has established social compensation funds to finance development projects in favour of the poorest, especially those affected by the armed conflict.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM PAST COOPERATION

7. Service delivery is more effective and can be sustained when it is developed with community participation and is part of a national policy, thus being replicated with national resources. Isolated, sectoral actions are less effective than integrated and coordinated interventions. Consequently, the new programme will focus on a reduced number of well-defined and integrated services. For example, bilingual and inter-cultural education methods have proven to be effective in decreasing drop-out rates, as well as in raising awareness among the indigenous population of their rights.

8. The conceptual framework of the programme for children especially difficult circumstances provided a limited response to the protection aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the new political environment, characterized by the respect for human rights. Thus, promotion of the Convention should play an important and complementary role in contributing to the efforts of the peace process to improve human rights in Guatemala. Social mobilization has been the most effective strategy to achieve key social changes, stimulated by civil society initiatives, without creating conflict.

9. The private sector has played a major role in the fortification of sugar with vitamin A, the distribution of oral rehydration salts and the mobilization of mass media. The decentralization of PLADES has proved to be an effective instrument for municipal-level planning, management of resources and service delivery. In parallel, the social information system for monitoring the national goals also is undergoing a process of decentralization to municipal levels. Such types of initiatives will continue to be strengthened in the new country programme.

10. The Central American social agreements, especially the Central American Social Integration Treaty, have stimulated regional and country mobilization around key social issues and have promoted horizontal cooperation among the Central American countries. UNICEF-supported subregional programmes have facilitated these cooperative initiatives.

PROPOSED COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY

11. Among other things, PLADES aims to, (a) promote economic growth, with sustainable social development; (b) encourage social policies as a basis for the integration of the population; (c) achieve the World Summit for Children goals; (d) improve resource allocations for investment in the social sector to tackle the structural problems of poverty; and (e) strengthen local government capacity and promote community organization.

12. As part of a larger United Nations effort, the proposed country programme objectives will contribute to (a) maintaining and consolidating the peace process; (b) promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women as important, ethical tools for national reconciliation and advocating children and women's rights; and (c) achievement of the goals for children and women as set out in PLADES, with an emphasis on disparity reduction and sustainability for poor, indigenous populations in selected rural areas and urban slums.

13. In the proposed strategy mix, advocacy and social mobilization will focus on building consensus and cooperation among all social forces on behalf of children's and women's rights. A highly effective use of the situation analysis of children and women will be important for this strategy. The service delivery strategy will focus on the provision of sustainable social services in selected poor rural and urban areas. The strategy for empowerment will enable poor families and communities to play a greater role in planning and managing services, as well as in assuring their social rights. A synergism will be created between the strategies of empowerment and service delivery which will provide a strong framework for sustainability. A capacity-building strategy will enable central and local institutions, mainly at the municipal level, to strengthen management of social policies and programmes. Resource mobilization will raise and redirect available financial resources from the private sector, bilateral agencies and financial institutions for the goals. Regional cooperation will reinforce Central American solidarity around children's issues within the context of the Central American social integration process.

14. There will be two programmes: social policy development and integrated basic services. The first programme, which will be implemented at the national level, aims to support social policy reform and promote and support the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with the active participation of civil society. Of the three components, the one for the Convention on the Rights of the Child will support implementation of administrative, legislative and social measures to enforce children's rights. UNICEF will support (a) the harmonization of national legislation with the Convention; (b) the development, implementation and monitoring of an information system to monitor compliance with the Convention at the national level; and (c) selected studies on children's rights which will strengthen the roles of national institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the implementation of the Convention. One result will be to generate greater public awareness on how to effectively implement children's rights. Another objective will be to strengthen the capacity of relevant government departments in the formulation, analysis and management of social policies and strategies to increase access to sustainable, quality services through more efficient use of public resources. A major partner for UNICEF support will continue to be the Social Cabinet, particularly for the decentralization of PLADES. UNICEF also will support the National Institute of Statistics in the development of a system to monitor the situation of children and women. Support also will be provided for strengthening municipal capacity in the management of social plans and the use of a gender framework in all aspects of planning and implementation. The major results will include the formulation of a set of legislative and administrative measures and coherent policies benefiting children and women. The third component of advocacy, information and social mobilization aims to increase public awareness of children's issues and rights and to stimulate support for the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and PLADES, using both traditional and non-traditional channels. It also will foster a stronger nationwide partnership between the state and civil society in the development and implementation of rights and programmes for women and children.

15. The integrated basic services programme aims to improve the quality of the lives of children and women in seven priority departments. A major strategy will be capacity-building through the development of municipal plans of action

/...

which will support integrated programme design, implementation and monitoring. In coordination with the Pan American Health Organization, community primary health services, and through the Ministry of Health, NGOs, churches and the municipalities, the health and nutrition components related to the achievement and sustainability of the decade goals will be expanded further. Nutrition services will focus on the reduction of malnutrition, the virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders and vitamin A deficiencies, and the reduction of iron deficiencies (anaemia), with support from the private sector. Among the expected results is the reduction of infant, under-five and maternal mortality.

16. The objective in education will be to continue the expansion of bilingual inter-cultural primary education in order to reduce drop-out and repetition rates. The main partners will be the Ministry of Education, NGOs and the private sector. Health and nutrition topics will be incorporated into the curricula. The results should include an increase in primary education coverage and improvement of knowledge, skills and values of the indigenous population. The objective in water supply and sanitation will be to expand access and coverage of facilities in partnership with the Ministry of Health and community organizations. Hygiene education and related health education activities will be reinforced further by the health and nutrition as well as other components. One expected outcome will be the reduction of diarrhoeal diseases. Helping women to develop sustainable income-generating activities should contribute to increased household incomes and improved household food security. Through the Ministry of Agriculture, rural women will receive credit to help them establish cooperatives and other small community businesses such as grocery stores and handicraft shops. UNICEF will provide technical assistance to the Government for the development of national policies for increasing the access of poor rural families to credit facilities.

17. The proposed country programme also will support and complement subregional initiatives of UNICEF in Central America. This will enable the cooperation to draw on institutions, agreements and resources of the Central American integration process to strengthen national efforts to improve the situation of women and children.

ESTIMATED PROGRAMME BUDGET

Estimated programme cooperation, 1997-2001 a/
(In thousands of United States dollars)

	<u>General resources</u>	<u>Supplementary funds</u>	<u>Total</u>
Social policy development	1 025	2 500	3 525
Integrated basic services	<u>3 975</u>	<u>22 000</u>	<u>25 975</u>
Total	<u>5 000</u>	<u>24 500</u>	<u>29 500</u>

a/ These are indicative figures only which are subject to change once aggregate financial data are finalized.
